



2015 PEP Annual Conference: Inclusive Growth and Employment for Poverty Reduction

Concept Note

On **May 4-8**, 2015, will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, the 12th edition of the PEP annual conference and general meetings, where approximately 150 participants – development researchers and practitioners, eminent scholars, representatives of various donor/international organizations and policy makers/stakeholders – from at least 30 different countries, will gather to discuss a variety of research and policy issues under the broad theme of inclusive growth and employment for poverty reduction in developing countries.

The event will be hosted and organized by the new PEP global office, based in Nairobi, and in collaboration with various agencies and local institutions in Kenya. This meeting occurs in the context of the global PEP research and capacity building initiative for Policy Analysis on Growth and Employment (PAGE) in developing countries, which is supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID, or UK Aid) and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

Objectives:

- Review of research evidence on specific policy issues related to growth, employment and poverty in developing countries
- Training and building capacity of developing country researchers for policy analysis and engagement
- Policy dialogue to catalyze effective research-policy action agendas
- Enhance opportunities for global collaboration and networking, amongst researchers and practitioners, to generate evidence and support policy implementation.

Tentative program:

April 29 – May 2	Pre-conference technical training and communication workshops
May 3	City tour
May 4-6	Review of research evidence on growth, employment and poverty reduction <i>Presentation of research results from ongoing PEP-PAGE supported projects</i> <i>Presentation of finalist proposals for the 3rd and final PAGE funding round</i> Networking and funding opportunities for new researchers <i>Individual meetings between PEP grantees and resource persons</i>
May 7	Policy forum <i>“Unlocking Africa’s growth for productive employment and poverty reduction”</i>
May 8-9	PEP Management and Board meetings

Context: the PAGE program

The 2015 PEP annual meeting occurs in the context of the ongoing PEP research and capacity building initiative for “**Policy Analyses on Growth and Employment**” (PAGE¹) in developing countries, co-funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID or UK Aid) and Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

Through this initiative, PEP is supporting a series of projects led by local research teams in developing countries (with priority given to low-income countries, fragile and/or conflict states), selected through competitive calls for proposals. So far, a total of 42 projects have been supported under the first two rounds of PAGE funding. Submitted through calls launched in the fall of 2012 and 2013, these projects were selected following the presentation of finalist proposals during PEP annual meetings held in South Africa in 2013, and in Bolivia in 2014.

The selection process of the 3rd and final PAGE call for proposals, launched in August 2014, is currently ongoing and those shortlisted as finalists will be invited to present their research proposal during the upcoming (May 2015) annual meeting in Nairobi. On the other hand, the 2015 PEP meeting will allow for those project teams supported under the previous PAGE rounds to present their final research reports and outcomes (before publication).

In both cases, the presentations (of proposals and final reports) will be discussed and commented in length with their peers, as well as with/by PEP resource persons and evaluators (i.e. international lead experts in the relevant research methods and themes). This is scheduled to take place on **May 4-6, 2015**.



Technical training and capacity building

As the core mission of PEP is to enhance capacity for development policy analysis in developing countries, the PEP annual conference (as part of the PEP manifold research support/grant program) also comprises an important training component – primarily targeting researchers from developing and low income countries.

First, participating researchers from developing and low-income countries are provided an intensive training workshop (**April 29 to May 2**) in the relevant methodologies to be applied in selected research areas². In the context of PAGE, the contents of these courses are related or tailored to the analysis of policies for growth and employment. Second, the same participants are also required to participate in a special workshop (**May 2**) to learn about skills and best practices for effective research communication and policy outreach, as well as PEP specific requirements in this regard for granted projects, to maximize chances of research uptake and policy impact.

Finally, all attending researchers (new applicants and current grantees) benefit not only from peer-review (through the group presentations, as described above) but also from the personal and customized mentoring by international leading experts, through individual meetings with PEP’s global resource persons with distinguished expertise in selected areas (**May 6**).

¹ Find out more about the PAGE initiative here : <http://www.pep-net.org/page>

² Find out more about these methods (PEP toolbox and research programs) here : <http://www.pep-net.org/programs/>

Review of research evidence

During the sessions of **May 4-6**, researchers from dozens of different countries will be presenting and discussing research issues and findings related to policies on growth and employment, offering a unique opportunity in terms of international peer-reviewing experience for developing country participants. Discussion of these technical papers or proposals will also lead to an intense review of research evidence and knowledge gaps in relation to the identified priority issues for policy analysis under the PAGE program.

Those priority issues, listed below, were identified by an international group of policy experts, in the context of the three PAGE calls for proposals (each call with a different set of priorities), as especially relevant to address specific knowledge gaps and policy needs in terms of evidence base:

- **Providing social protection to the informal sector**
- **Safety net complementarities**
- **Youth employment and entrepreneurship**
- **Employment intensity of non-agricultural growth**
- **China's growth: opportunities and challenges for developing countries**
- **Entrepreneurial risk tolerance by gender**
- **Discrimination in credit access for women at the SME level**
- **Improving the targeting of public expenditures and social assistance**
- **Design of minimum wage policies and impact on youth and female workers**
- **The inclusiveness of growth: the role of labor markets**
- **Natural resources and employment**
- **Micro and small enterprises for economic empowerment and poverty reduction**

PEP best practice awards

This annual conference will also feature a ceremony to present the winners of the 2015 PEP best practices awards.

As the ultimate goal of PEP research support activities is for the yielded evidence and new expertise to serve to inform decisions-making in the beneficiary countries, PEP has created this parallel competition to reward those research teams who, in addition to showing high-quality



research professionalism, would most actively engage in the implementation of a successful “policy outreach” strategy, i.e. to link their PEP research findings to policy action/influence - either at the local, national and/or international levels.

See for example the description of the 2014 awardees: <http://www.pep-net.org/2014-pep-best-practice-awards>

Policy dialogue

The gathering of such a variety of stakeholders is also the occasion to discuss the policy relevance and implications of PEP related research, through “thematically-focused” sessions, in order to define and support the research-policy action agenda.

In the context of the 2015 conference, on **May 7**, PEP is planning a special high level policy forum on the theme of:

“Unlocking Africa’s growth for productive employment and poverty reduction”

After many years of stagnation, African economies have started registering rapid and, arguably, more sustained growth during the past decade. The average real GDP growth rate, in Africa, was 4% in 2013 and is projected to expand to 4.7% in 2014. About 25% of countries in the region have achieved growth rates of 7% or higher in 2014, and several are currently amongst the fastest growing countries in the world. This has created a high degree of enthusiasm and assurance for Africa in overcoming poverty and attaining major development goals.

However, such fast economic growth - primarily driven by high commodity prices, resource extraction and exports - has not yet been successful in reducing poverty and creating productive employment. Critical development challenges remain for Africa to sustain and translate rapid economic growth into inclusive growth and the creation better opportunities for all.

This will require to identify the underlying factors that limit job creation for productive employment and hinder the potential to overcome poverty, as well as to assess how Africa’s new wealth and natural resources could be leveraged to address its pressing social and economic objectives.



With this special event, PEP aims to gather several world-renowned experts along with government and policy stakeholders in the region to discuss these issues and related policy options/solutions.

Hosted by a facilitator, the policy forum will feature two panels, involving a total of 7-8 distinguished participants - experts, practitioners, donors and policymakers - who will invited to discuss a variety of key issues on the theme, based on different experience and perspectives.

Questions/interventions from the audience will be welcome during each session, and efforts will be made to produce a “live webcast” to connect the event with an external audience online.

Finally, the main lessons and recommendations drawn from this dialogue will be compiled, published and publicized by PEP for wider impact. PEP and its partners will reach out widely to communicate these outcomes using various means, including the circulation of related videos, briefs, newsletter (nearly 10,000 recipients) and relays through social media pages.

See, for example, the recommendations published and circulated following the 2014 PEP conference: <http://www.pep-net.org/2014-policy-forum-recommendations>

Opportunities for global collaboration, networking and knowledge transfers

In all dimensions and component activities, the PEP annual conferences provide a unique international networking experience, and opportunity to share/compare knowledge and experience, amongst development researchers and practitioners from all around the world.

Historically, PEP annual conferences attract about 150 to 200 participants, from 35 to 50 different countries - mostly from developing regions, but also from developed countries. These meetings thus lead to substantial knowledge transfers (South-South, North-South, and South-North), as well as greater coordination and/or collaborations between various institutions/ stakeholders and initiatives worldwide.

In addition, as they are organized in the context of ongoing funded programs, PEP also leverages its annual conferences to nurture new ideas and identify young scientists who can be mentored and/or assisted through its manifold support program.

Beyond scientific qualifications, PEP competitions tend to favour the inclusion of women and young scholars, as well as those from low-income countries. Their participation in PEP conference and research activities will contribute to creating and building a growing pool of locally-based male and female researchers, to nourish and influence current and future debates related to economic policy, poverty, gender, inequality and sustainable development.

Technical advisory group:

- John Cockburn
- Martin Valdivia
- Arjan De Haan (IDRC)
- John Piper (DFID)
- Abebe Shimeles (AfDB)
- Mamadou Biteye (Rockefeller Foundation)
- Celia Reyes
- Bernard Decaluwe

Contacts

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Venue

The event will take place in the renowned **Safari Park Hotel**, of Nairobi

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Find out more via the [PEP conference webpage](#)